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SENSITIVE

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STATE FOR EUR/UMB, DRL/AE

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [MD](#)

SUBJECT: Embassy Begins Preparation for Elections 2009

REFS: A. 07 Chisinau 1517 B. 07 Chisinau 1393

[C](#). 07 Chisinau 1380

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: On January 22, Ambassador Kirby convened six USAID implementers to discuss USG assistance in advance of the 2009 national parliamentary elections: political party organization, campaign skills, training community activists, voter motivation and education, long- and short-term observation, and administration of elections. Discussion also included Mission assistance for the March 16, 2008, Parliamentary Assembly elections in the autonomous Gagauzia region. End summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Present at the meeting was leadership from the local offices of the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, Eurasia Foundation, Academy for Educational Development, American Bar Association/Rule of Law (ABA/ROL), and IREX/Citizen Participation Project. Several participants were concerned that the 2009 national elections would be hard fought and that the ruling party would be tempted to use all means to retain power. USG assistance implementers could begin now to address political-party and electoral deficiencies: leftover Soviet attitudes (especially top-down centralization in all parties and voter passivity), poor political-party organization, overabundance of political parties without distinct political platforms, ruling Communist Party unhappiness with the 2007 local elections, and uncertainty about changes to the electoral code. (See refs A and C.)

[1](#)3. (SBU) The implementers are planning to:

- assist parties which wish to merge to improve their organization and address new legislation establishing vote thresholds and banning electoral blocs. (See ref B);

- help parties structure polling to understand undecided-voters preferences;

- train party workers and community activists in get-out-the-vote and poll-watching efforts;

- help parties develop grass-roots local organizations (especially for young people and women);

- train parties in the skills of retail politics (door-knocking, voter mobilization, message-spreading and ongoing solicitation of citizens' views; and

- train party workers in election laws and procedures, and identification of violations.

[1](#)4. (SBU) The Embassy's Democracy Commission will target grants

towards NGOs election-related activities. Embassy will also be able to invite U.S. experts to provide training in areas the USAID implementers cannot cover. The Embassy will coordinate USG elections assistance, coordinate with other donors, and help monitor political parties' activities during the electoral season.

KIRBY